

SIMPLE UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE
ACT OF 2009

(Mr. TERRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TERRY. I am introducing the Simple Universal Health Care Act, a plan which will let the uninsured opt into a system which is an identical twin to the health care that we have in Congress. This plan removes restrictions on preexisting conditions. It allows employers to opt in and maintain the current tax benefits for providing coverage. The administrative costs will be around \$15 million, not billion, not \$1.2 trillion, and would be paid for by the insurance companies, leaving the taxpayers with no cost.

This plan offers a variety of options, and companies compete for customers, thus holding down the cost and maximizing benefits without a government takeover of health care, without using taxpayer dollars, without taking money from Medicare or raising taxes on small business.

The SUH Act is a simple, affordable private-sector approach to making sure all people have access to health insurance, and I encourage Members of both sides of the aisle to support this simple solution.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. GUTHRIE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, as a Member of Congress, I not only have the responsibility of looking out for future generations, but also a duty to ensure that we are doing all we can to take care of our seniors. Real reform needs to make health care more affordable and more accessible. Unfortunately, the bills being crafted by the majority could threaten the health care benefits seniors already receive while raising premiums.

The plan currently in the House makes massive cuts to Medicare which the Congressional Budget Office anticipates will increase seniors' Medicare prescription drug premiums by 20 percent over the next decade.

For those who live on a fixed income, the possibility of having to pay more is very worrisome.

Their plan also includes cutting \$162 billion from Medicare Advantage, a program widely supported by the seniors because of its choices and affordability.

We should focus on ensuring Medicare continues to be there for our seniors, not cutting their benefits to fund an unproven proposal.

PROPOSED HEALTH CARE REFORM
WOULD BE HARMFUL FOR
NORTH TEXAS BUSINESSES

(Mr. BURGESS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, in August, in addition to the town halls in my district, I hosted two roundtables with small- and medium-sized businesses in North Texas. Parts of health care reform are going to affect business, like it or not. They are going to see a tax increase, a new employer mandate, and penalties for noncompliance.

The North Texas business representatives said they needed more tools, not more regulation, to make health care affordable for small and medium businesses. With regard to an employer mandate, one panelist explained this would add to the burden during what are arguably tough economic times.

An individual who was the health benefits manager at a large manufacturing plant in Denton said, Our employees are already very well taken care of without mandates. If more gets mandated on us, then we are going to have to look at what we will cut, what we are going to take away in order to be competitive.

Another individual said, If we had to furnish health insurance, if it is mandated on us, we just simply will not be able to afford to do so. We will have to cut jobs.

I promised to take the lessons learned back to Washington, D.C., as we continue to work on health care reform. Most Americans today are actually concerned more about jobs and the economy than the current health care proposals that we are debating here in Congress.

Washington should be working to help businesses create jobs, not writing penalties for those who are trying to provide employment.

MEDICARE CUTS WOULD IMPACT
OUR SENIORS

(Mr. BOUSTANY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, as a heart surgeon, I saw patients firsthand in our current government-run programs, like Medicare, who lacked real access to a doctor, leaving them out of the system. Many of our Medicare patients and seniors out there know exactly what I am talking about.

So I ask the Democratic leadership, how can you cut \$500 billion, a half-trillion dollars, from Medicare, and not hurt access and quality for our seniors? I also ask our Democratic leadership, how can you create a government-run health care takeover that fails to control costs or improve quality?

We can do better. I know we can do better. We can achieve commonsense solutions in a bipartisan way. But the current Democratic-led bills do not do that. They do not constitute meaningful reform.

We need to work together to strengthen Medicare, to put it on a bet-

ter and sounder financial footing, to ensure that it will be there for our seniors when they need health care. We need to lower costs for all seniors, and for all Americans, for that matter, by increasing competition in the health insurance marketplace, promoting wellness programs and limiting frivolous lawsuits.

Let's put the doctor and patient back in control of health care.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members must heed the gavel, please, and adhere to the 1-minute limitation.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. HERGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, as the backbone of our economy, small businesses create over 72 percent of all new jobs. It defies logic that House Democrats would pay for their government takeover of health care by actually raising taxes on these same businesses by \$820 billion.

During a serious economic downturn, we should be pursuing policies that will create jobs and put us on the path to recovery. Instead, these tax hikes will cost an additional 5.5 million jobs.

History shows that the American economy is at its strongest when taxes are lower and small businesses are permitted to keep more of their money to invest and grow.

Mr. Speaker, higher taxes for government-run health care is a bad deal for the American people.

IN SUPPORT OF MEDICARE
ADVANTAGE

(Mr. MARCHANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I have heard repeatedly from the seniors about their high satisfaction with Medicare Advantage and their fears of losing it. The Senate Finance plan would slash \$123 billion from Medicare Advantage.

Over 10 million seniors are currently enrolled in the Medicare Advantage plan, and, according to CBO Director Elmendorf, those proposed cuts to Medicare Advantage will force reduced benefits for many seniors, over 100,000 seniors in the three counties that I represent. This is in stark contrast to "if you like your insurance, you can keep it."

Director Elmendorf states very clearly that under the Senate Finance plan, Medicare Advantage enrollees will suffer reduced benefits.

We must preserve Medicare Advantage for those who are benefiting from the peace of mind that it provides, and

strengthen it for those seniors that have not yet turned 65.

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JUST SAY "NO"

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, one of the interesting debate points that we are listening to today is the assertion that somehow what we need to do is just allow people to sell insurance across State lines, and that's going to solve all our problems. Well, first of all, you can buy insurance today across State lines. What we don't do is allow somebody who incorporates in a State with very weak protections and minimal provisions to go in and undercut the laws of other States that seek to protect their citizens. You can buy insurance as you see fit. It's just that people who are going to play in a market have to play by the rules, and if somebody cheats, then there is an opportunity to use the local insurance commissioner to protect the consumer.

Under the legislation that we're proposing, the only thing that changes is that for the first time, some of the States that haven't protected their consumers will have higher standards. This is a good thing.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, the senior citizens in my district are scared, literally scared. They ask me, What are the Democrats planning to do to my Medicare and Medicaid? And I have to tell them, I really don't know because the Democrats are hiding behind closed doors in the dark and keeping the rest of us out of the picture. So we don't know for sure. Except we do know this: They are planning massive cuts to Medicare, upwards of \$500 billion, and massive cuts to Medicare Advantage that will result in a loss of health care for millions of seniors. According to the Congressional Budget Office, that Advantage cut would be around \$162 billion. As a result, Medicare Advantage plans will drop out of the program, limiting seniors' choices and causing many of them to lose their current health care coverage. Cuts to Medicare Advantage will have an exceptionally harmful effect on seniors in rural areas like mine. I urge us to reject this plan.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. LATOURETTE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, all throughout history, there's been the big lie, and we've got the big lie going here again.

It goes like this: Republicans won't let us have health care reform.

Republicans are the Party of No.

Why are Republicans stopping us from reforming health care?

Well, I'm going to tell you something—the Democrats have won the last two elections because we did such a bang-up job. But the fact of the matter is, there are 257 of them. There are only 177 of us, although it looks like a bigger number over here today. We couldn't stop a one-car parade. This health care discussion is a fight between the left and the far left. And sadly for the Democratic majority, they've got people in their party that think that this health care proposal proposed by the far left is wacky. It takes \$500 billion out of Medicare. You do nothing with the lawyers as they file lawsuits and cause doctors to practice defensive medicine.

This is a bad bill. They can't even get their own team to row the boat, but they want to say, Republicans don't want to reform health care.

HEALTH CARE

(Mrs. EMERSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, health care reform has gripped the Congress for the better part of a year now, and we're finally getting to the core of this debate: cost. Without an affordable system of health care, we'll forever have problems with access. But too many good bipartisan proposals to lower costs have been ignored—eliminating international barriers to market access for U.S. consumers, speeding new generics to market, promoting comparative effectiveness research, and better decision-making tools for doctors and their patients.

You may ask, Why? It's real simple. The administration made an \$80 billion deal with the big drug companies that prevents us from offering our proposals to save consumers money on their medicine. Our constituents who often have trouble paying for their medicines today will continue subsidizing the people from other countries who pay half of what we do for the same drugs. So this \$80 billion deal actually makes more money for big drug companies because it will encourage more people to take brand-name pills instead of generics, increasing the market share and profits of the drug companies. No wonder they were so quick to accept this deal, and what a scam the administration has fallen prey to.

HEALTH CARE

(Ms. SHEA-PORTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to read the comments in a letter I received from Mr. Bradley Ball, one of my constituents in New Hamp-

shire, because I don't think his voice is being heard on the floor today. He said that he was lucky enough to have insurance, but he had to pay for it himself, almost \$7,000 a year. He said, "So to keep my current health care policy is just less than \$7,000 a year, and my copay for Thalidomide could be as low as \$810 a month. That translates into \$16,620, rounding off, just including that one medication in health care expenses for a year. Of course there are more. My monthly income is \$1,660, \$19,920 a year, through disability and pensions. How can I pay for my other expenses—heat, electricity, food, clothing, shelter, et cetera, on the remaining \$3,300 I will have each year? Do I have some savings? Yes. But very soon I am going to run out of all my possibilities. What will you have me do next?"

Then he goes on to say that he could live if we could get the prescriptions for him and help him pay his health insurance. And then he says, "I don't think that in the United States of America this is what anyone would wish on anyone else. I know you would not want to be in this situation. I don't care whether it's called a right or a privilege, the current system is broken. Please help fix it."

WHEN WILL YOU LISTEN?

(Mr. FORBES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, last week I received a call that every Member of Congress fears: a plant with 1,100 jobs in a town of 9,000 residents closed its doors. We want to be there for them, and we will be there for them as the symptoms of a bad economy entangle their lives. But Americans are asking you a larger question today. The question is, When will this government listen to the voice of wisdom, shouting for us to address the causes of a bad economy and not just the symptoms?

As one of 17 Members of Congress who voted against every one of your bailout stimulus bills, I watched you ignore that voice of wisdom as you saddled our grandchildren with a debt that they will wear for decades as a badge of dishonor for your deafness. I watched as you ignored it as you tried to impose your energy agenda, knowing it would stifle America's competitiveness and kill jobs. And I watched as you ignore it while you try to tax our existing jobs into oblivion.

Mr. Speaker, today Americans are asking a simple question: When will you listen?

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. HINOJOSA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I am here representing the families in my congressional district that need health